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UNCLAS TAIPEI 003517

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/RSP/TC, IO/UNESCO COWLEY, EB/TPP/MPA NISSEN,  
STATE PASS USTR AND AIT/W, USTR FOR WINELAND, WINTERS AND  
BALASSA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: CHINESE TAIPEI SUPPORTS U.S. POSITION ON UNESCO CDC

REF: SECSTATE 149077

1. Econoff met with Deputy Director of the Multilateral Trade Affairs Division, Taiwan Bureau of Foreign Trade (BOFT), Amelia Dai, August 22 to deliver reftel points. Dai said Chinese Taipei shares U.S. concerns regarding the possibility that the UNESCO Cultural Diversity Convention (CDC) could encourage economies to seek special treatment within the WTO framework for so-called "cultural goods." Counselor Jenny Yang, of the Chinese Taipei mission in Geneva will attend the August 25 meeting called by WTO Secretary General Supachai to discuss the potential trade implications of the CDC.

2. Dai informed AIT that Chinese Taipei is currently preparing a letter to SG Supachai listing its three major concerns with the CDC provisions. First, Chinese Taipei believes the scope of the Convention is too broad and is ill-defined. This lack of clear definition could be interpreted to allow an economy to claim virtually any good or service has cultural significance. Second, the Convention would seem to allow for trade distorting measures in an effort to protect these ill-defined cultural goods in violation of WTO rules. Third, Chinese Taipei is concerned that the relationship between the CDC and WTO commitments is unclear, potentially leading some to assume that the CDC is an exception to the WTO agreement.

3. While Chinese Taipei recognizes the importance of cultural diversity, it believes protectionist measures that impact trade should be avoided. Chinese Taipei will support efforts to encourage UNESCO not to adopt this Convention during the General Conference in October 2005 and volunteered to contact its diplomatic partners who are also UNESCO members to urge them not to support the adoption of the CDC without further negotiations.

KEEGAN